INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

ISBA

Assembly

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ISBA/A/14
27 August 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Resumed second session
Kingston, Jamaica
5-16 August 1996

DECISION OF THE ASSEMBLY RELATING TO THE BUDGET OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY FOR 1997

(Adopted by consensus on 16 August 1996)

The Assembly of the International Seabed Authority

1. Adopts the revised budget of the Authority for 1997 in the sum of US$ 4,150,500 (ISBA/A/9/Add.1), subject to the points in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report of the Finance Committee (ISBA/A/12-ISBA/C/7), 1/ and endorses the evolutionary approach;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to submit the revised budget to the United Nations;

3. Notes the reservations expressed in the Council in respect of certain aspects of this budget by the Russian Federation, members of the Council from the Eastern European Group and the United States of America.

1/ See annex.

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Annex

PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY FOR 1997*

Report of the Finance Committee

1. On 14 August 1996, the Finance Committee considered the draft budget of the International Seabed Authority for 1997 submitted by the Secretary-General (ISBA/A/9). In the light of the comments by members of the Committee and in order to give effect to an evolutionary approach to the establishment of the secretariat, the Secretary-General submitted to the Finance Committee revised budgetary requirements for the administrative expenses of the Authority for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1997 (ISBA/A/9/Add.1). The Secretary-General explained the justification for the revised budgetary requirements and members of the Committee asked further questions.

2. The Finance Committee then discussed the Secretary-General's proposals in private. It was recalled that the United Nations General Assembly had decided to fund the administrative expenses of the Authority in accordance with the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (General Assembly resolution 48/263). In the course of the discussions, it was noted that in 1997 the costs of the Authority would have to be absorbed within the existing United Nations budget ceiling of US$ 2,608 million.

3. The Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the revised budget requirements for 1997 (ISBA/A/9/Add.1), subject to the points in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 below. The Committee further recommends endorsement of the evolutionary approach (ISBA/A/9/Add.1).

4. The Finance Committee makes the following recommendations:

(a) Given that all the computers and associated costs may not be needed in 1997, the cost of acquisition of furniture and equipment should be reduced from $240,000 to $190,000;

(b) Bearing in mind that some of the proposed travel could be combined, the total amount provided for official travel of staff (other than to official meetings) should be reduced from $64,000 to $44,000;

(c) The amount proposed for consultants should be reduced from $120,000 to $90,000.

5. As a consequence, the Finance Committee recommends that the total proposed revised budgetary requirement of $4,250,500 be reduced by $100,000 to $4,150,500.

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* Originally issued as document ISBA/A/12-ISBA/C/7.

6. The Finance Committee makes the following further recommendations:

(a) The Secretary-General should keep under consideration the question whether each of the additional posts provided for in the revised budget needs to be filled in the course of 1997; a/

(b) The Secretary-General should review the transportation arrangements (buses) to see if reductions can be made;

(c) The Secretary-General should consult the host country concerning the residence to see whether in future this item could be omitted from the budget;

(d) As regards conference-servicing costs, the Finance Committee noted that the intention was to hold four weeks of meetings in 1997, and urged that further efforts should be made to seek to rationalize the arrangements for meetings. Efforts could also be made to engage staff locally wherever possible;

(e) As regards office accommodation, the Secretary-General is encouraged to continue to seek to obtain the best possible terms;

(f) The programme support element should not be a charge on the Authority since the Authority's budget for 1997 is to be met from the United Nations budget.

7. The Committee noted that the present case is exceptional since it was considering the first budget of the Authority. The Committee requested the Secretary-General to submit an initial performance report on the implementation of the 1997 budget in time for the Committee's consideration of the 1998 budget.

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a/ The approximate cost of the additional 10 posts in a full year is $1 million.

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Decision of the Assembly relating to participation of the International Seabed Authority in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

Acting on the recommendation of the Council, the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority,

Noting that the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in its report recommended that the International Seabed Authority participate in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) in accordance with the Regulations of the Fund and accept the jurisdiction of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal in matters involving applications alleging non-observance of those Regulations, 1/

Noting also that article 3, paragraph (b), of the UNJSPF Regulations provides that membership in the Fund shall be open to the specialized agencies referred to in Article 57, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and to any other international, intergovernmental organization that participates in the common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service of the United Nations and the specialized agencies,

Bearing in mind that article 3, paragraph (c), of the UNJSPF Regulations requires that admission to membership in the Fund is subject to the acceptance by the organization concerned of the UNJSPF Regulations and the conclusion of an agreement with the UNJSPF Board as to the conditions that shall govern the admission,

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1/ LOS/PCN/153, vol. V-LOS/PCN/WP.50/Rev.3.

Recalling that in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority is an autonomous international organization,

Recognizing that pending the approval of its own financial and staff regulations, the Authority should apply the Financial Regulations and Staff Regulations of the United Nations,

Considering that in order to ensure cost-effectiveness of the Authority, it would be desirable for the Authority to become a member of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund,

1. Decides that it would be in the interests of the International Seabed Authority to become a member of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps in order to apply for membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and to conclude with the Secretary of the Board the agreement regarding the participation of the Authority in the Fund referred to in article 3, paragraph (c), of the UNJSPF Regulations.